

The Duty to Serve in an Emergency Requires Planning

In a natural disaster or other city-wide emergency, the City continues to deliver essential services to the public. The City workforce is divided into two groups:

ALPHA -- employees who, unless specifically exempted, continue to perform assigned duties regardless of severe weather or emergency.

BETA -- All other employees are part of Norfolk's emergency shelter system and may be called in to serve at a shelter or perform other duties. Only the City Manager can exempt an employee from shelter duty.

Because you may be called to serve the public during an emergency, the Bureau of Emergency Services suggests you plan ahead for the needs of your family, pets and property:

- Review and update your individual and family disaster plan. Ask an out-of-state friend to be your "family contact." After a disaster, it's often easier to call long distance. Ask all family members to "check in" during an emergency. Remember, emergency shelters and most motels will not take pets.
- Review how to turn off water, gas and electricity at your home. If you are evacuating or reporting for work in an emergency situation, turn off everything before leaving. Bring in any loose objects, such as lawn furniture.
- Make plans to protect your property in a hurricane. Permanent storm shutters are the best protection for windows and doors. A second option is boarding up windows and doors with pre-cut 5/8" plywood, cut to fit and ready to install. Tape does not prevent windows from breaking.
- Develop or update your personal inventory list. Take pictures or video of your personal property and essential forms. Make copies and send one out of the area for safe keeping. Consider purchasing flood insurance. Most disaster federal aid is usually in the form of a loan which must be paid back.

- Stock emergency supplies and assemble a Disaster Supplies Kit
- Keep your gas tanks filled and extra cash on hand in case an emergency shuts down ATMs and gas pumps.
- If you are assigned to the City Emergency Operations Center or other field unit, make sure you have all the materials you will need to do your job. These include department/bureau plans, maps, phone numbers, lists.

For more suggestions, check www.vdes.state.va.us/, the City's Intranet, or the Red Cross.

In case of an emergency that impacts City operations, the City will provide updates on:

- Local TV and radio
- The City's website: www.norfolk.gov
- Employee's automated emergency information line: 664-6820